



# An analysis of Utah's K-3 Reading Improvement Program



Institute of Education Sciences

U.S. Department of Education



# An analysis of Utah's K–3 Reading Improvement Program

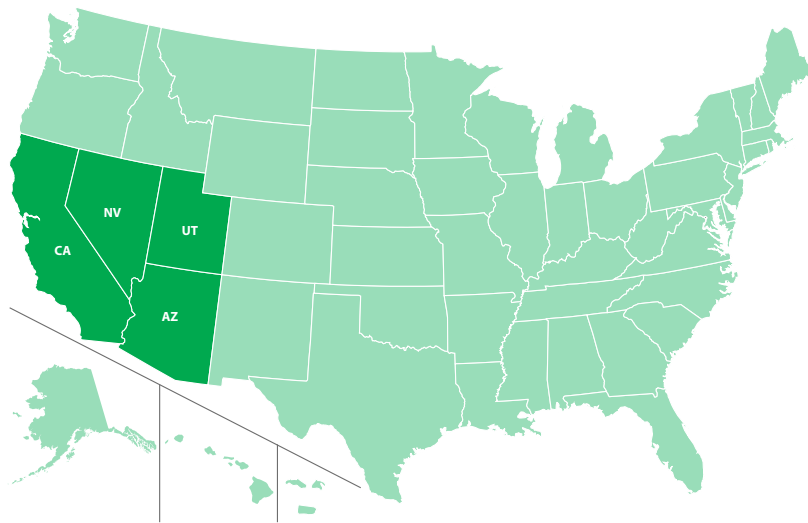
June 2007

**Prepared by**

**Reino Makkonen  
WestEd**

**Chun-Wei Huang  
WestEd**

**Paul Koehler  
WestEd**



**Issues & Answers** is an ongoing series of reports from short-term Fast Response Projects conducted by the regional educational laboratories on current education issues of importance at local, state, and regional levels. Fast Response Project topics change to reflect new issues, as identified through lab outreach and requests for assistance from policymakers and educators at state and local levels and from communities, businesses, parents, families, and youth. All Issues & Answers reports meet Institute of Education Sciences standards for scientifically valid research.

June 2007

This report was prepared for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) under Contract ED-06-CO-0014 by Regional Educational Laboratory West administered by WestEd. The content of the publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

This report is in the public domain. While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, it should be cited as:

Makkonen, R., Huang, C-W, & Koehler, P. (2007). *An analysis of Utah's K–3 Reading Improvement Program* (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2007–No. 002). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory West. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

This report is available on the regional educational laboratory web site at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

## Summary

# An analysis of Utah's K-3 Reading Improvement Program

### **More districts and charter schools reported implementing key elements of the state literacy framework and meeting their own goals.**

Utah's K-3 Reading Improvement Program provides state matching funds to help districts and charter schools achieve the state's goal of having third graders read at or above grade level. All 40 Utah school districts took part in both Year 1 (2004/05) and Year 2 (2005/06) of the program, and the number of participating charter schools increased from 10 (of 12) in Year 1 to 17 (of 20) in Year 2.

With the aim of informing Utah legislators and education officials on program activities, use of funds, and outcomes, Utah's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Patti Harrington, asked Regional Education Laboratory West at WestEd to review district and charter school participation during the first two years of the program. The Year 1 analysis was presented in early 2006.

This report presents the Year 2 analysis, which addresses the following key questions:

- How have participating school districts and charter schools carried out the provisions of the state legislation?

Program funds most commonly supported key components of the Utah K-3 Literacy Framework for Successful Instruction and Intervention, specifically tiered literacy instruction (a targeted reading intervention model), small-group literacy instruction, and focused professional development. More than two-thirds of program participants also reported funding literacy coaches or reading specialists and training for staff to administer and interpret reading assessments to monitor student progress and guide instruction. Both tiered and small-group instruction were used more widely in Year 2 than in Year 1, as were the state's Student Tutoring Achievement for Reading program, new basal reading programs and leveled reading libraries, and before- and after-school literacy programs.

- What outcomes are evident after two years of program implementation?

More participating districts and charters reported meeting their self-established goals in Year 2, and statewide grade-level proficiency rates—identified through English Language Arts Criterion-Referenced Test results—increased slightly for grades 1 and 3 but remained about the same for

grade 2. However, it is difficult to assess the program’s influence on these changes, as there is no control group and researchers did not observe the local efforts under way in schools.

**June 2007**

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Summary</b>   | <b>iii</b> |
| <b>Overview</b>  | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>How have participating school districts and charter schools carried out the provisions of the legislation?</b>        | <b>2</b>   |
| Program funds increasingly supported methods emphasized in the state's literacy framework                                | 2          |
| Participants applied funds across five program components  | 3          |
| Practices funded by the program generally aligned with national reading research   | 6          |
| <b>What outcomes are evident so far?</b>   | <b>7</b>   |
| More participants met self-reported goals in Year 2  | 7          |
| More Criterion-Referenced Test proficiency gains at grades 1 and 3   | 7          |
| <b>Limitations of the study and implications for further research</b>  | <b>8</b>   |
| <b>Notes</b>   | <b>9</b>   |
| <b>Appendix A The SB 230 legislation</b>   | <b>11</b>  |
| <b>Appendix B Utah's K–3 Reading Improvement Program: state and local funding for fiscal 2005–07</b>                     | <b>14</b>  |
| <b>Appendix C Summary of WestEd's SB 230 Year 1 Report</b>   | <b>16</b>  |
| <b>Appendix D Self-reported SB 230 program information by district or charter school</b>                                 | <b>17</b>  |
| <b>Appendix E Individual district and charter school data: self-reported proficiency goals and results</b>               | <b>64</b>  |
| <b>References</b>  | <b>89</b>  |
| <b>Boxes</b>   |            |
| 1 Data sources and study limitations   | 2          |
| 2 K–3 Reading Improvement Program funding in Year 2  | 3          |
| <b>Figures</b>   |            |
| 1 More participants reported meeting self-reported proficiency goals in Year 2 than in Year 1                            | 7          |
| 2 Criterion-Referenced Test proficiency rates increased more in Year 2 than in Year 1 in grades 1 and 3, but not grade 2 | 8          |
| 3 Overall grade-level Criterion-Referenced Test proficiency rates rose more in Year 2 than in Year 1, except at grade 2  | 8          |
| <b>Tables</b>  |            |
| 1 Self-reported uses of program funds show widespread support of methods from Utah's literacy framework                  | 3          |
| 2 Some school districts targeted a specific proficiency level on the Criterion-Referenced Test, others an annual gain    | 6          |
| <b>B1 Districts</b>  | <b>14</b>  |
| <b>B2 Charter schools</b>  | <b>15</b>  |